



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HGO

Date 2/24/2021

Testimony in Support of HB 758 - Maryland Licensure of Certified Midwives Act

The World Health Organization designated 2020 the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. HB 758 would expand the number of qualified midwives in Maryland by establishing a new licensure for certified midwives (CMs), a nationally recognized form of Midwifery, and a part of a national strategy to address health disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes.

The Legislative Women's Caucus of Maryland has identified addressing infant and maternal mortality and especially the disparate rates in communities of color as a major priority. Midwifery is an important part of continuity of care and consumer choice because Midwifery emphasizes women-centered care that "prioritizes the woman's unique individual needs, as defined by the woman herself."

The addition of a licensure for Certified Midwives would expand the workforce available to all communities across the state of Maryland and streamline the process for Midwives whose early education was not in nursing. Maryland already recognizes Certified Nurse Midwives and Certified Professional Midwives. The only difference between Certified Midwives and Certified Nurse Midwives is that they have a different college degree prior to entering a Midwifery program. Certified Nurse Midwives have a degree in nursing, while Certified Midwives have another college degree, usually in health or sciences. Certified Midwives students take additional coursework as prerequisites or for their midwifery graduate education.

Certified Nurse Midwives and Certified Midwives are identical in graduate program education, exams, certifying entity, scope of practice, and settings.

Licensure for Certified Midwives would expand the number of midwives in Maryland, create a more streamlined process for those who have completed a qualifying undergraduate program but do not have the time or resources to return for a nursing degree, and would also free up slots in the nursing programs for those who wish to pursue nursing long-term.

HB 758 has the support of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, as well as the Legislative Women's Caucus and Latino Caucus and I would ask this committee for a favorable report.